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BOROUGH OF OSWESTRY.



ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

L. WILSON EVANS, M.C., M.B., D.P.H.

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BOROUGH OF OSWESTRY.

Mayor : Councillor CLEMENT BRISTOW.

HEALTH COMMITTEE—

Chairman : Councillor T. PITT.

The Health Committee consists of the whole Council.

STAFF OF THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT—

Medical Officer of Health—

L. WILSON EVANS, M.C., M.B., D.P.H.

Sanitary and Housing Inspector, Food Inspector, etc.—

HENRY T. ISAAC, Cert.R.San.I., M.S.I.A., Certified Meat
Inspector.

H. BIRD JONES, Town Clerk.

JOHN E. TAYLOR, A.M.Inst.C.E., P.A.S.I.,
M.Inst. M. and Cy.E.,

Engineer and Surveyor

HEALTH DEPARTMENT,
6, SALOP ROAD,
OSWESTRY.

May, 1940.

To the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Oswestry.

I have the honour to submit my Twelfth Annual Report.

The urgent need for economy of paper necessitates a reduction in words so this report will be reduced to a minimum.

As the registrar's figures are not to be ready until July the appearance of this report will be similarly delayed.

In common with others the even tenure of our way was rudely upset in August by the threat of war.

The rapid involvement in A.R.P. activities and evacuation problems quickly submerged the usual routine work of the department.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

L. WILSON EVANS.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area	2,180 Acres.
Resident population, mid-1939	
Average population appropriate to the calculation of death rates	
Number of inhabited houses according to Rate Book end of 1939	2,931
Rateable Value	£75,862.
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	£293.

Public Health Staff.

Name.	Qualifications	Office held.	Whole or Part Time.	Salary contributed to under P.H.A. or by Exchequer.	Other Public Office.
L. Wilson Evans,	M.B., B.S., L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., D.P.H.	Medical Officer of Health	Part	Yes.	M.O.H. Oswestry R.D.C., Ellesmere U.D.C. and R.D.C. Whitchurch and Wem U.D.C., Asst. M.O.H. Salop County Council.
H. T. Isaac	M.S.I.A., C.M.I.	Sanitary Inspector	Whole	Yes	Inspector under the Shops Acts and Petrol- leum Acts.
J. M. Roberts		Clerk	Whole	No.	

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

(including the chief occupations of the inhabitants, and the influence of any particular occupation on Public Health).

The Manager of the Employment Exchange has kindly given me the following information regarding the state of employment in the Borough.

The chief industries in the Borough are the Great Western Railway, about 550 of whose employees reside in the Borough, Building and Public Works Contracting, about 250 residents, and the Printing Trade, 120 residents, whilst in the Distributive Trades probably 1,000 persons residing in the Corporation's area are employed in shops, warehouses, markets and similar establishments.

Coalmining (1,250 employees), Quarrying (300 employees), and Agriculture (3,000 employees) form the chief industries in the immediate vicinity of Oswestry, although only a small proportion of those employed live in the Council's area. The construction of public works has added to the numbers of those in employment in the Borough area.

Unemployment has almost disappeared as the following comparative figures show and there is, in fact, an unsatisfied demand for workers in shops, offices, canteens, places of amusement, farms and public works.

The following are the comparative figures of persons living in the Borough :—

	<i>Men.</i>	<i>Women.</i>	<i>Juveniles.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
March, 1934.....	929	54	43	1026
„ 1935.....	802	79	59	940
„ 1936.....	796	66	48	910
„ 1937.....	616	54	37	707
„ 1938.....	409	24	27	460
„ 1939.....	461	40	27	528
„ 1940.....	79	26	9	114

There was no evidence of any particular occupation having any influence on the public health.

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR.

	<i>Total.</i>	<i>Male.</i>	<i>Female.</i>
Live Births—Legitimate			
Illegitimate			
	—	—	—
	Total		
Birth Rate			
Birth Rate for Oswestry Rural District			
Birth Rate for England and Wales—			
	<i>Total.</i>	<i>Male.</i>	<i>Female.</i>
Deaths			
Death Rate			
..... Corrected			
..... Uncorrected			
Rural District			
..... Corrected			
Death Rate for England and Wales			
Number of women dying in, or in consequence of childbirth—			
From Sepsis			
From other causes			
Total			
Maternity Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births			
Maternal Mortality Rate for England and Wales per 1,000 live births			

Deaths of Infants under one year of age—						
Legitimate, M. , F. , ;	Illegitimate, M. , F. ;					Total .
Deaths of Infants under one years of age.						
All infants per 1,000 live births	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births						
Illegitimate Infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births						
Rural District	... ..	... ..	... ..	... ..	... ..	... ..
England and Wales	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	...	...	...	...	...	...
„ from Measles (all ages)	..	..	..	..	..	..
„ Whooping Cough (all ages)	...	...	...	...	...	...
„ Diarrhoea (under two years of age)						
„ „ (over two years of age)						

The following gives the number of deaths from the various causes supplied by the Registrar General :—

	<i>Male.</i>	<i>Female.</i>
Measles
Whooping Cough
Diphtheria
Scarlet Fever.....
Influenza
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System
Other Tuberculous Diseases
Syphilis
General Paralysis of the Insane, Tabes Dorsalis
Senility
Cancer, Malignant Disease
Diabetes
Cerebral Haemorrhage, etc.
Heart Disease
Aneurysm
Other Circulatory Diseases.....
Bronchitis
Pneumonia (all forms)
Other Respiratory Diseases
Peptic Ulcer
Diarrhoea, etc. (under 2 years)
Cirrhosis of the Liver
Other Liver Diseases
Appendicitis
Other digestive Diseases
Acute and Chronic Nephritis
Puerperal Sepsis
Congenital Debility, Premature Birth, Malforma- tions, etc.
Suicide
Other Violence
Other Defined Diseases
Ill-defined Causes
	—	—
	—	—
	Total	.....

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

(a) *Laboratory Facilities.*

As in previous reports with the addition of the Emergency Public Health Laboratory Service, Wrekin College, Wellington; Telephone: Wellington 626.

(b) *Ambulance Facilities.*

Arrangements as set out in previous reports.

(c) *Nursing in the Home.*

Arrangements as set out in previous reports.

(d) *Treatment Centres and Clinics including Clinics used solely for Diagnosis or Consultation.*

Arrangements as set out in previous reports.

(e) *Hospitals: Public and Voluntary.*

Arrangements as set out in previous reports.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

I am indebted to the Borough Surveyor for the following report on Water Supply and Sewerage.

Water Supply.—The rainfall registered at Penygwely Reservoir for the year was 44.61 inches, which is above the average of 38.38 inches per annum over the last 40 years. Exceptionally heavy rain was experienced in the month of July the figure of 8.56 inches being the wettest July on record. Between July the 6th and July 25th Penygwely Reservoir rose 13ft. 6in., and remained overflowing until August 13th. This enabled all demands to be met without having to draw upon the Liverpool Emergency Supply. The average Daily Consumption of water for all purposes during the year was 33 gallons per head of which 11 gallons was attributable to Trade and Municipal Purposes.

The filtration plant has not produced results as satisfactory as could be desired when called upon to deal with the increased amount of water now required.

CHEMICAL ANALYSIS.

November 24th, 1939.

Appearance:—Unfiltered. The sample was bright with a very slight film deposit of mineral and vegetable debris. Fibres, monads, peridinium present.

Filtered. The sample was clear and bright.

Results in parts of 100,000.

Colour	<i>Unfiltered.</i>		<i>Filtered.</i>	
	A.P.H.A. Yellow Brown 25.		A.P.H.A. Yellow Brown 25.	
Reaction pH.	6.8	.....	6.7
Electric Conductivity at 20° C.	64.	.....	66.
Chlorine in Chlorides	0.7	.....	0.7
Hardness : Total	2.5	.....	2.5
,, Temporary	0.0	.....	0.0
,, Permanent	2.5	.....	2.5
Nitrogen in Nitrates	0.00	.....	0.00
Free Ammonia	0.0004	.....	0.0000
Albuminoid Ammonia	0.0120	.....	0.0080
Oxygen absorbed in 4 hrs. at 80° F.	0.270	.....	0.260
Metals Iron	0.005	.....	0.003
Odour	Nil	.....	Nil
Free carbonic acid	0.2	.....	0.2
Total solids, dried at 180° C.	4.5	.....	4.5
Alkalinity as Calcium Carbonate	1.2	.....	1.2
Nitrites	Absent.	.....	Absent.

REMARKS.

Unfiltered. This sample has a trace of colour and suspended matter, and shows organic and bacterial impurity indicative of pollution by matter of sewage or manurial origin, although not to an excessive degree for crude surface water.

The water is soft in character, contains comparatively little saline and mineral matter in solution, and no metals with the exception of a negligible trace of iron.

It requires treatment in order to render it suitable for the purposes of a public supply, but this could be effectively carried out by ordinary processes.

Filtered. This sample shows improvement in clarity compared with the sample of unfiltered water, but there has been no reduction in colour.

The water is soft in character contains no excess of saline or mineral matter in solution, and no metals with the exception of a negligible trace of iron.

Filtration has also resulted in some improvement in organic and bacterial purity, but purification in these respects has not been fully efficient and the water is not of the high degree of bacterial purity desirable in a public water supply since excremental organisms, i.e., *B. coli*, are present in small number.

These results indicate that additional treatment is required.

BACTERIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION.

	<i>Filtered.</i>	<i>Unfiltered.</i>
No. of Bacteria growing on Agar per cc. or ml. in one day at 37° C.	1	1
In 2 days at 37° C.	3	15
In 3 days at 20° C.	160	540
Bacillus Coli—Absent in	10 c.c.	1.0 c.c.
,, Present in	50 c.c.	10 c.c.
Bacillus Welchi (<i>B. Enteritidis</i> Sporogenes)—Present in	—	100 c.c.
Ditto —Absent in	100 c.c.	10 c.c.

Proposals for the modification of the filters have since been approved by the Council.

SWIMMING BATHS.

Owing to the war and the withdrawal of the grant from the National Fitness Council, the scheme for the provision of new Swimming Baths and Slipper Baths has been deferred.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

Complaints have been received of flooding in Whittington Road and Llwyn Road area and preliminary investigations show that certain sewers are inadequate for the area which they drain.

A detailed survey of the sewerage system of the town was in the course of preparation at the outbreak of war but its completion has had to be postponed.

An additional 4 acres of land has been taken on to the area used for land irrigation and an improvement in the quality of the effluent may be expected but the difficulty mentioned in my report of last year with regard to the disposal of sludge still exists.

SCAVENGING AND REFUSE DISPOSAL.

An additional three-quarters of an acre of land at the Red House Field has been enclosed for control tipping purposes. There has been a marked increase in the amount of refuse collected in the town during the past twelve months, due to an influx of people during the later part of the year. For the same reason there has been an increase in the amount of scavenging required.

J. E. TAYLOR,

Borough Surveyor and
Water Engineer.

Eradication of Bed Bugs.

Particulars of the action taken for the eradication of bed bugs including information as to :—

(1) The number of (a) Council Houses found to be				
infested	.....	.....	.....	Nil.
(b) Other houses found to be infested				7
The number disinfested, Council Houses	.....	.....		Nil.
The number disinfested, Other Houses	.....	.....		7

(2) The methods employed for freeing the infested houses were as follows :—

Gaseous Disinfestation after the removal of wall papers, releasing picture rails, skirtings, including space under roof.

(3) The methods employed for ensuring that the belongings of the tenants are free from vermin before removal to Council Houses :

Bakehouses	17
Offensive Trades	25
Ice Cream	30
	<hr/>
Total	3083
	<hr/>

The following are the number of notices served and complied with.

	<i>Preliminary.</i>	<i>Statutory.</i>	<i>Complied with.</i>	<i>Not Complied with.</i>
Public Health Act	178	25	202	1
Factory and Work-shops	43	—	42	1
Shops Act, 1934	15	—	15	—
Rats and Mice Destruction Act	11	—	11	—
Milk and Dairies Order	14	—	14	—

In addition to the above notices 196 letters were written by the Inspector and 62 reports made to other departments.

There were 159 complaints investigated.

PREMISES AND OCCUPATIONS CONTROLLED BY BYELAWS.

There are two tanneries and one chandlery in the Borough. They are visited periodically and as may be expected there are occasional complaints of some form or another. It may be said that on the whole these trades which are described as offensive trades now give little trouble to your Inspector.

Ready co-operation of the owners has helped considerably in adjustments and the conduct of the trades concerned and during the year the number of complaints were exceptionally small and not of a serious nature.

Smoke Abatement.—There are two large chimney stacks and several of smaller dimensions. If it were fully realised how much waste and nuisance was created in the town from inefficient stoking, greater care would be taken by the few who still fail to give proper and strict attention to plants and chimney stacks of the various types.

Much time has been given to this subject in the past and with some satisfaction as to the results but owing to the increased legislation of late a certain amount of diversion of duties has of necessity had to take place. More attention will be given to the smoke question as time permits.

FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS AND WORKPLACES.

Since the coming into operation of the Factory and Workshops Act 1901 considerable advances and many changes have been made in connection with health in industry. Inspections for purposes of provision as to health including inspections made by the Sanitary Inspector were carried out as usual. Forty-one inspections were made and 43 notices sent, the bulk of which required the cleansing of walls and ceilings and in the case of bakehouses the thorough scrubbing of woodwork. It is to be observed that while those responsible know their legal obligations there is the tendency to overlook the fact that such places must be maintained at all times in clean and hygienic conditions. It only too frequently happens that nothing is done until notices are served by the Inspector and in other cases the bare minimum is done. The present times call for a higher and more energetic response to health matters as they affect the worker and especially so where any food is prepared. It is also good business for the employer to have a healthy staff working under healthy conditions.

SHOPS ACT, 1934.

Eighteen shops were inspected under the Shops Act 1934. The requirements included the provision of W.C. accommodation and washing facilities. Ventilation and means and maintenance of temperature was deficient in some cases.

Frequent inspections were made during the cold weather to ascertain whether a sufficient temperature was maintained.

In several cases this was not so and notices were sent requiring matters to be remedied. In all cases these notices were complied with.

HOUSING.

Total number of New Houses erected during the year :—

(i) By Local Authority	37
(ii) By other Local Authorities	Nil
(iii) By other bodies or persons	20

Included in the 37 are 25 houses which were built with State assistance under the Housing Acts.

Inspection of Dwelling-houses.

(i) No. of Houses inspected under Section 9, Housing Act, 1936	9
(ii) No. of Houses inspected under Section 11, Housing Act, 1936	7
No. of Notices served for repairs under Section 9, Housing Act	9
No. of notices complied with at end of 1939.....	9

In the case of the houses dealt with under Section 11 of the Housing Act, 1936, a Demolition Order was made in one case ; an undertaking that the house shall not be used for human habitation in another, and in the remaining five cases undertakings were given for the conversion of two cottages into one and three cottages into two. (This conversion included the demolition of one cottage).

Proceedings under the Public Health Act, 1936 :—

(i) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs.....	70
(ii) Number of houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices	70
Number of families rehoused by Local Authority under Slum Clearance.....	5
Number of persons involved	19
Number of Families rehoused by Local Authority under Overcrowding	15
Number of persons involved	95

Circular No. 1866 dated 8th September, 1939, issued by the Ministry of Health directs that with reference to slum clearance schemes there should be a postponement of work owing to the outbreak of war. This especially applies to actual demolition of condemned houses. The circular states that in view of the possible destruction of housing accommodation by attacks from the air, it is clearly desirable that the existing supply of accommodation should not be diminished. There are at the moment 30 houses where demolition orders are actually operative and the majority, if not all, would have been demolished by now if it had not been for the instructions received in this circular and also the policy of the Council not to eject tenants until accommodation was provided either by themselves or some other source. There are, therefore, 28 houses empty and possibly some of them could be reserved for the purpose required in the circular if ever the necessity should arise.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(a) *Milk Supply.*

At the end of the year there were 32 retailers supplying milk to the Borough. Five of these retail Tuberculin Tested Milk. There are six cowkeepers who produce milk in the Borough. Fifty-seven informal samples of milk were taken during the year by the

Sanitary Inspector and examined for specific gravity, fat content, solids not fat and cleanliness. Of these six were found to be unsatisfactory. Letters were sent in these cases and subsequent samples showed improvement. The cowsheds, milk shops and dairies receive frequent inspection. The cowsheds are on the whole in good condition and the methods of production satisfactory.

VETERINARY INSPECTION (EXTRACTS FROM VETERINARY OFFICER'S REPORT).

1,392 cows were examined by the Veterinary Inspector during the year ; 188 in the Borough and 1,204 in the Rural District.

The herds, with a few exceptions, were in a good progressive condition. One dry cow was condemned to the knacker's yard.

Two cows were condemned and seized under the Tuberculosis Order. Both were in good average condition. Tubercle bacilli was found in the sputum of one and the milk of the other was also infected. Compensation was allowed in accordance with the order.

RICHARD HUGHES, F.R.C.V.S.

In 1931 the routine sampling of milk for the presence of Tubercle Bacilli as shown by the Biological Test was commenced.

The cows supplying milk to the Borough are examined at six monthly intervals by the Veterinary Inspector.

The following figures show the results of these examinations.

Year.	Number of Samples taken.	Number showing presence of Tubercle Bacilli.	Number of Cows found to be Tuberculous at Bi-annual Veterinary Inspection
1931	23	3	3
1932	18	3	1
1933	13	0	1
1934	9	1	1
1935	12	1	1
1936	18	0	0
1937	5	0	3
1938	18	0	3
1939	17	1	2
Total	133	9	15

(b) *Meat and other Foods.*

The Food Inspector keeps careful supervision of the food supplies. There are two recognised days for salughtering, Mondays and Thursdays, when every slaughterhouse is visited and all the meat inspected. During the year 1,222 inspections were made.

The Inspector is notified of any slaughtering that takes place on days other than the recognised days. This ensures that all meat is examined.

The above mentioned arrangements have been modified since January, 1940. For the purpose of the control of the distribution of meat the Ministry of Food instituted centralised slaughtering throughout the country. Two slaughterhouses in the Borough were selected by officials of the Ministry for the slaughtering of all animals from the Oswestry Rural District and the Borough. This aggravated conditions in slaughterhouses which already were far from satisfactory, and if it had not been for the strenuous efforts of the Meat Inspector and for the fortunate chance that he had the assistance of a pupil whom he had trained to a considerable degree of efficiency, the proper inspection of the meat would have been impossible.

There are neither meat stalls in the streets nor vehicles hawking meat in the Borough. The only meat stalls are those situated under cover in the Cross Market.

The markets receive close attention, frequent visits being paid and special attention given to the produce brought in.

The shops and all food preparing places are also inspected.

MEAT CONDEMNED DURING 1939.

	Cattle excluding Cows.			Sheep and Lambs.	Pigs.
	Cows.	Calves.			
All diseases except Tb. Whole car- cases condemned	—	—	1	—	2
Carcases of which some organ was condemned	9	3	—	2	16
Tuberculosis only.					
Whole carcasses condemned	—	—	—	—	5
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	2	—	—	—	98

Other food condemned included :—Rabbits 341 ; pigeons 46 ; partridge 17 ; poultry 129 ; kippers 156 ; haddocks 3 ; fish (fillets) 28 lbs. ; canned hams 2 ; tinned veal 1 ; apples 24 lbs. ; damsons 112 lbs ; potatoes 112 lbs. ; eggs 13 cases ; peppermints 1 box ; chewing gum 2 boxes ; sweets 4 boxes ; pudding spice 1 box ; powders 2 boxes ; 60 bottles sundry preparations ; ground ginger 1 box ; coffee essence 1 bottle ; gravy browning 1 bottle ; olive oil 1 bottle.

(c) Adulteration, etc.

The County Council was the authority responsible for the administration of the Food and Drugs Act, 1928, and other legislation dealing with the adulteration of foods intended for human consumption. However the Food and Drugs Act 1938 which came into force in October, 1939, provides for two classes of authorities in the working of the Act, namely "Local Authority" and the "Food and Drugs Authority."

It will be seen therefore that Local Authorities as apart from County Councils have their responsibilities in the administration of this important Act which is a consolidation Act with wide scope. Owing to the outbreak of war it has not been thought reasonable to enforce the full powers as applied to Local Authorities but action has been taken where practicable. The registration of places where ice cream is sold, stored or manufactured together with places where food is prepared for human consumption is being dealt with. Inspections have been made and notices served requiring a prescribed standard for such places. The Town Council has also taken advantage of their powers to specially authorise the Sanitary Inspector to take samples of food in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Act.

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

Artificial Immunisation against Diphtheria.

The material used was Alum Precipitated Toxoid. Two doses at fortnightly intervals, .2cc. and .5cc. This has now been increased to four weeks. The immunisation has been carried out by the patients' own doctors.

Number of children immunised during the year :—

(a) Pre-school Children	.....	.....	.....	.....	2
(b) School Children	.....	.....	.....	.....	15
					—
					17
					—

Number of children Schick Tested during the year 49

Number ,, who gave positive result Nil

The percentage of school children immunised at the end of the year was 19.6 per cent.

MEASLES AND WHOOPING COUGH REGULATIONS, 1939.

Regulations made by the Minister of Health and dated October 23rd, 1939, made compulsory the notification of Measles and Whooping Cough.

DIPHTHERIA ANTITOXIN ORDER.

A supply of Diphtheria Antitoxin is available for cases residing in Oswestry in accordance with the provisions of the above order. This is obtainable from the Health Offices, 6, Salop Road, or after office hours from the Sanitary Inspector, Mr. Isaac, Croeswylan Lane. 40,000 units were used during the year.

DISEASES OTHER THAN TUBERCULOSIS NOTIFIED DURING THE YEAR.

DISEASE.	TOTAL CASES NOTIFIED.																	Cases Admitted to Hospital.											Total Deaths.										
	Under 1 year	1-2 years		2-3 years		3-4 years		4-5 years		5-10 years		10-15 years		15-20 years		20-35 years		35-45 years		45-65 years		TOTAL	Under 1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5 years	5-10 years	10-15 years	15-20 years	20-35 years	35-45 years	45-65 years	Over 65 years	TOTAL				
Diphtheria	1	1	1	1	1	7	4	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	22	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1					
Scarlet Fever	1	1	1	1	1	2	5	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1					
Puerperal Pyrexia																4								1															
Pneumonia							1	2	1															4															
Para Typhoid Fever																																							
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis																																							
Erysipelas																																							
Whooping Cough																																							

England and Wales

Case Rate per 1,000 population Diphtheria (Average for 10 years)

..... Scarlet Fever

..... Average for 10 years ()

..... Pneumonia

..... Puerperal Pyrexia —

..... (Live and Still) Figures not yet available.

TUBERCULOSIS.

New Cases and number of deaths during 1939.

Age periods.	New notifications.				Deaths.						Admitted to Sanatorium.			
	Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.		Respiratory.			Non-Respiratory.			Respiratory.			
	M.	F.	M.	F.	New Cases 1939 M.	New Cases 1939 F.	Old Cases M.	Old Cases F.	New Cases 1939 M.	New Cases 1939 F.	Old Cases M.	Old Cases F.	M.	F.
0														
1														
5														
10		1												
15		1		1										1
20														
25								2						
35								1					2	
45								1					1	
55														
65 and upwards														
Totals ...	4	6	2	1	1	3	4	1	1	0	0	0	3	2
	10		3		4			5			0		5	

